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I-15 CORE Project now 50% complete

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PROVO — Drivers in Utah County may soon see the light at the end of the tunnel.

As of Friday, work on the I-15 CORE Project — the largest construction project in Utah history — is 50 percent complete.

The sheer volume of dirt and cement that's been moved and put into place goes to show that the freeway is clearly taking shape. Crews have moved an estimated 5 million tons of dirt and laid down more than 1 million yards of concrete paving. That averages out to 60,000 to 80,000 yards of fresh concrete a week.

"To reconstruct a full interstate system in 35 months is an aggressive timeline, and we're on pace to meet that aggressive timeline," said Dal Hawks, project manager for the I-15 CORE Project.

"A normal person's driveway would only be 8 to 10 yards, so it's the equivalent of doing 20,000 to 30,000 driveways every week. So it's a tremendous volume of work to accomplish in a short period of time," Hawks said.

The \$1.7 billion, 24-mile project is also giving Utah County and the state a huge economic boost. So far it is on budget and on schedule to be finished by December 2012.

"There's approximately 1,600 people working on the project full time," Hawks said. "It's a huge effort to deliver this on time and on budget."

The project will add two lanes in both directions from Lehi Main Street to Spanish Fork Main Street. It will extend the express lane in both directions from University Parkway in Orem to Spanish Fork. Crews will rebuild and reconfigure 10 freeway interchanges and replace 63 aging bridges.

Whether you look at it as the glass is half full or half empty, the halfway mark is something to celebrate. UDOT believes drivers will more enjoy the second half of the project because they get to drive on more of the new freeway.

"One thing we are looking forward to is that by the end of this calendar year, all traffic is expected to be on new concrete paving, and so that will be a nice milestone for the public to watch for over the next few months," Hawks said.

Even at 50 percent done, there will still be a lot of closures and delays to deal with over the next 15 months. UDOT is already warning people about next Saturday night's Utah/BYU game in Provo, and advising fans to leave early, especially with the Provo Center street off-ramp closed for the next couple of months.

All projected work and openings are dependent on weather. For the latest construction detours visit www.i15core.utah.gov.

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